

I. Introduction – “Don’t Hang Up Yet!”

- Working for Gallup Polls — people hang up when they think you’re selling something.
- People “hang up” on sermons about gratitude because they expect a guilt trip.
- Gratitude can’t be demanded; it’s something that happens when we realize how much we’ve been given.

II. Ten Lepers, One Returns

- All ten are healed; only one comes back to thank Jesus.
- Jesus never *commands* thanksgiving—He commands obedience (“Go to the priests”).
- Gratitude is not a prescription for healing—it’s the natural reaction to mercy.

III. Faith and Salvation – “Your Faith Has Made You Well”

- The Greek word *sozo* means both *healed* and *saved*.
- The Samaritan receives something deeper than physical healing—salvation through faith.
- His gratitude is an act of worship flowing from faith.

IV. Law and Gospel – From Condemnation to Freedom

- The law declared the lepers “unclean” and cut them off from community.
- Nine put their hope in the law (priests).
- The Samaritan put his hope in Jesus, the true source of cleansing.
- We are also condemned by the law but freed by faith in Christ alone.

V. Luther and the Daily Bread of Gratitude

- Luther: God gives daily bread to all—even the ungrateful.
- The Christian difference: recognizing the Giver.
- Thanksgiving is not repayment; it’s recognition.

VI. The Downward Arrow of Grace

- Salvation comes from God to us (downward arrow).
- Our love and gratitude are responses (upward arrow).
- “We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)
- Gratitude is descriptive (what faith does), not prescriptive (what the law demands).

VII. Living in Gratitude

- As faith grows, thanksgiving becomes spontaneous, not forced.
- Even in suffering, gratitude endures because God’s love never fails (1 Thess. 5:16–18; Rom. 8:28).

VIII. Conclusion – Free to Give Thanks

- You don’t *have to* be grateful—you’re already loved, forgiven, and provided for.
- But when you realize who the Giver is, you are *free* to give thanks.
- Gratitude isn’t a rule—it’s a response to grace.

“Now that you know you don’t *have to* be grateful, what do you *want* to thank God for today?”

Reflection Questions

1. Opening the Heart

- Have you ever felt pressured to be grateful when you didn't feel it?
- How does that compare to the kind of gratitude that comes naturally from joy or relief?

2. The Ten Lepers

- Read Luke 17:11-19. What do you think kept the nine from returning to Jesus?
- In what ways do we sometimes seek “priests” (rules, systems, self-effort) instead of turning to Christ?

3. Law and Gospel

- How does understanding the difference between law and gospel change the way you see gratitude?
- What does it mean for you personally that “your faith has saved you”?

4. Daily Bread

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What are some “daily breads” (ordinary blessings) that you may take for granted?
- How might recognizing the Giver behind them change how you live or pray?

5. Grace First, Gratitude Second

- Read 1 John 4:19. How does the “downward arrow” image help you picture the relationship between God's grace and your response?
- Can you think of a time when realizing God's grace made you thankful without anyone telling you to be?

6. Living It Out

- How can you practice gratitude not as a duty, but as a declaration of faith?
- Read Romans 8:28. In what hard place or circumstance do you sense God might still be working for your good?